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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [UNSC](#) [KPKO](#) [IS](#) [LE](#)
SUBJECT: PLANNING FOR THE UNIFIL RENEWAL: ISRAEL
SUGGESTIONS AND DPKO PREVIEW OF THE SYG'S REPORT

Classified By: Ambassador John R. Bolton, per 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary. Israeli Mission to the UN Political Counselor Gilad Cohen told Poloffs the week of June 26 that the GOI believes the upcoming UNSC resolution extending the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) should urge the Lebanese Government to deploy forces to three specific hot-spots along the Blue Line. He also argued the resolution should revisit the question of whether Lebanon's sovereignty has been fully restored -- given the ongoing effort to implement UNSCR 1559's call for an end to foreign interference in Lebanon. UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) political officer Cornelia Frank told Poloffs June 30 that she would consider how the report could highlight hot-spots along the Blue Line, but she predicted it would focus more on areas where Hizballah has established fortifications adjacent to UNIFIL locations. DPKO plans to release the SYG's report on July 21. UNIFIL's current mandate will expire on July 31. End Summary.

Israel Proposes New Language

12. (C) During a conversation with Poloffs on June 27 about the July 31 renewal of UNIFIL's mandate, Israeli Political Counselor Gilad Cohen suggested that the USG consider proposing several changes to the language in UNSCR 1655 that authorized the most recent extension of UNIFIL's mandate (on January 31, 2006):

-- PP3: "...has essentially completed parts of its mandate, focusing now on the remaining tasks of restoring international peace and security, and assisting the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of effective authority in the area.

-- PP5: "...Gravely concerned at the ... on 27 December 2005 and the hostilities initiated from the Lebanese side on 28 May 2006, which demonstrate..."

-- OP6: "Recalls Security Council resolutions in which the Government of Lebanon has been called upon to fully extend and exercise its sole and effective authority throughout the South and expresses concern that little progress has been made in this regard,

-- OP8 (bis): "Concerned that little progress has been made in establishing a Joint Planning Cell as recommended by the Secretary-General,

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-- OP8 (ter): "Urges the Government of Lebanon to establish a permanent presence of Lebanese Army units in the north east of the village of al Ghajjar (4-28), in the vicinity of the

village of Hula (8-33) and in the area of Rmaich (5-20 to 5-22) as well as through joint patrols along the Blue Line."

13. (C) Explaining the above suggestions, Cohen questioned the assertion in PP3 of UNSCR 1655 that two of three parts of UNIFIL's mandate -- including the task of restoring Lebanon's sovereignty -- had been fulfilled. Arguing that the ongoing efforts to implement UNSCR 1559 demonstrate that Lebanon's sovereignty has not been fully restored, Cohen suggested that Israel's alternate formulation more accurately describes UNIFIL's remaining mission. But he also acknowledged that the USG might have legal concerns about changing the language in PP3 and said Israel would understand if the current formulation had to be retained.

14. (C) Cohen defended Israel's proposal for OP8 (bis) by noting that the Lebanese have not responded to UNIFIL Force Commander Pelligrini's letter requesting the establishment of the JPC. On OP8 (ter), Cohen explained that the three towns listed represent areas of frequent cross-border tension. If the Lebanese Army deployed to these towns, he said, the incidence of Lebanese shepherds straying into Israel and provoking IDF gunfire would decline significantly. Cohen also expressed hope that UNIFIL could persuade the Lebanese Government to erect signs near the Blue Line in these areas to warn its citizens not to proceed.

15. (C) Poloffs agreed to convey Israel's suggestions to Washington, but noting the significant changes from previous language, also urged Cohen to consult with DPKO before the finalization of the SYG's next report on UNIFIL. If the SYG's report highlights the need for the Lebanese Army to deploy to the three specific towns mentioned in OP8 (ter), it might be possible to make this point in the resolution by drawing from language in the report. Poloffs also encouraged Cohen to exchange views with the Secretariat on progress towards Lebanese Army deployments in the South and efforts to

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establish the JPC.

DPKO Outlines SYG Report

16. (C) Poloffs met DPKO political officer Cornelia Frank on June 30 to discuss the SYG's next report on UNIFIL, after she heard Israel's views from Cohen. While agreeing to consider how the Secretariat could highlight areas along the Blue Line where Lebanese forces were most needed, she predicted the report would focus more on the locations where Hizballah has constructed fortifications next to UNIFIL locations. She recalled that GOL officials have told UNIFIL Force Commander Pelligrini several times that the GOL would not deploy troops to areas considered part of the Sheba'a Farms region, such as Ghajjar. Frank added that Lebanese MFA official Boutros Assaker had reiterated that point to DPKO during his recent visit to New York.

17. (C) Frank acknowledged that little progress has been made towards the establishment of the JPC, despite Pelligrini's repeated efforts to engage the GOL, and suggested the report would recognize this point. She did note that the GOL has expressed its intention to deploy 100 personnel to Naqoura Harbor, in UNIFIL's area of operation, most likely by the end of the summer. She explained that this deployment would have to await the construction of a GOL installation at the harbor, which itself could only proceed once a road project linking Naqoura to nearby towns is complete. Frank expressed hope that these 100 Lebanese Army personnel would represent a new deployment to the south rather than a realignment of existing forces in the area.

18. (C) While Frank predicted the SYG's report would not mention the assassination of two Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorists in Sidon on May 28 -- since the attack is not germane to UNIFIL's mandate except insofar as it influences

the political environment -- she did say the report would chronicle the increase in Israeli overflights of Lebanese territory around the time of the May 28 hostilities. She said the report would confirm that the May 28 hostilities were initiated on the Lebanese side, although it was not clear which party -- Hizballah or the Palestinians -- was responsible.

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